



## **TOWN OF TEWKSBURY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

### **Meeting Minutes February 11, 2014**

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by David Plunkett, Chairman at the Pike House (temporary Town Hall). Present were David Gay, Brian Linder, Patricia Lelos, Steve Sadwick, Director of Community Development, and Richard Montuori, Town Manager.

Larry Sanford was not in attendance.

#### **Approval of meeting minutes – January 14, 2014**

**MOTION:** Mr. Gay made the motion to approve the January 14, 2014 meeting minutes; seconded by Mr. Linder and the motion carried 5 0.

#### **A) Main Street Discussion with Marc Ginsburg**

Present was Marc Ginsburg. Mr. Montuori explained that the Committee has requested Mr. Ginsburg come to discuss what his possible plans are for the properties he owns along Main Street and what he envisions in the future for Main Street. Mr. Ginsburg discussed some of the factors that need to be taken into consideration when it comes to developing Main Street such as timing, zoning, availability of property, etc. The Planning Board has taken steps with the creation of overlay districts which allows for more flexible zoning. Mr. Ginsburg feels this has helped create some development activity, however, it is being done for an entire 2 or 3 mile corridor. Mr. Ginsburg feels the goal of creating a downtown type atmosphere with mixed use will eventually be achieved, but, until that time, it will be spotty with residential and larger boxy retail. Mr. Ginsburg feels that in order to achieve the downtown atmosphere/sidewalk economy, the town needs to be a more active participant; beyond zoning. Mr. Ginsburg discussed land takings and creating target areas. Mr. Plunkett suggested working with the land owners to develop the properties as opposed to land takings.

Mr. Montuori explained that his focus has been on Route 38 from the Lowell line to the Wilmington line and noted that there are common property owners throughout Route 38 and provided the example of John Sullivan. Mr. Montuori suggested the Committee try to work with these landowners to see what can be done.

Mr. Plunkett disclosed for the record that he has been representing Mr. Sullivan on a few matters.

Mr. Montuori noted that he agrees with Mr. Ginsburg that Route 38 will likely not improve unless the town gets involved in some manner.

Discussion took place on the town center and ways to expand upon the existing area. Mr. Ginsburg suggested targeting a specific area to begin the downtown/town center as he feels it will expand from there. Mr. Ginsburg discussed some of the areas where this could be done and the pros and cons of each, such as: Chandler Street to Tewksbury Hardware area, Shawsheen Street to Victor Drive, and Victor Drive to Chandler Street. Mr. Ginsburg explained that what he envisions likely cannot be attained, but he is going to continue to purchase and develop lots as he sees fit by the current zoning and construct the best building he can under the intent of the zoning; however, he would also love to work with the town to help achieve their goals.

Discussion took place on the old police station, the Motel Caswell, and the potential uses for these sites. Mr. Montuori explained that there has been discussion on possibly moving the Pike House to the old police station location or creating a conservation area as the water table is very high.

Mr. Plunkett explained that the prime focus of the Master Plan will be on the Route 38 corridor and asked if Mr. Ginsburg would be willing to engage with whatever vision groups necessary and possibly be a point person for the business community. Mr. Ginsburg explained that he would prefer to be part of a committee that researches developing the true downtown area rather than working on the entire corridor, but he is willing to work with the town.

Discussion took place on the amount of nail salons and pizza shops in Tewksbury. Mr. Ginsburg noted that they are all taxpayers regardless of the type of business. Mr. Montuori explained that this is not being looked at from a revenue prospective; it is more a matter of providing a better quality of life for the residents.

Mr. Plunkett noted that the Zoning Bylaw Subcommittee recently discussed the utility company area along Route 38; the condition and possibly contacting them to begin cleaning up the area.

Mr. Montuori asked where Mr. Ginsburg sees development in Tewksbury outside of Route 38. Mr. Ginsburg feels that other towns offer better incentives. Discussion took place on the economy.

## **B) EDSTAT Discussion Steve Sadwick**

Mr. Sadwick explained that at the last meeting there may have been a handout regarding Economic Development Self Assessment evaluation that is done through Northeastern University. There have been approximately 300 communities nationwide that have used this assessment tool to look at how economic development in their community compares to other communities. Northern Middlesex Council of Governments (NMCOG) has district local technical assistance grants that are given to them to help communities within their service area. One of the grants mentioned the EDSTAT program through Northeastern and Mr. Sadwick asked NMCOG to allow them to participate in the

program using their staff resources; which is funded through the grant. NMCOG has agreed to spend up to \$4,500 towards the assessment test. The State pays NMCOG to work with Tewksbury to do the self assessment and NMCOG is using its own resources to pay the entry fee to Northeastern University to have the test done. Mr. Sadwick noted that he expects to have NMCOG and Northeastern at a future meeting to discuss how they will set up the self assessment.

**C) Update on development activity**

Mr. Sadwick explained that he requested the building department provide the last 3 months of commercial tenant fit up activity. The Building Commissioner has stated that there has not been a significant amount of tenant fit up. Mr. Sadwick noted that Staples is now in the old Wang facility. There is a large amount of space that is being renovated into offices. Workout World has moved in next to Ocean State Job Lot. In addition, Thermo Fisher is doing some additional finishing inside the building; there is an additional approximately 10,000 square feet.

Mr. Gay asked about Aubuchon Hardware moving to the old Home Goods location. Mr. Sadwick explained that no one has approached the town on this and he has reached out to the owners of the property to see what the status is.

Mr. Gay asked about the proposal for Hibachi. Mr. Sadwick explained that they have put in a permit to divide the space in two.

**Old Business**

There was no old business.

**New Business**

Mr. Montuori noted that two new members have been appointed to the Committee, but have not yet been sworn in.

**Adjourn.**

**MOTION: Mr. Linder made the motion to adjourn; seconded by Mr. Sadwick and the motion carried 5-0.**

***Approved: 4/9/14***

**No documents submitted for 2/11/14 Agenda**